

## Lessons from Gideon

### Judges 6-8

#### I. Introduction: I

1. **2** It is important for us to study the Old Testament (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11).
2. **\*\*** A particularly dark period in Israel's history was the period of the Judges.
  - A. The Book of Judges begins after the death of Joshua (Judg. 1:1).
  - B. The period of the Judges lasted a ~325-350 years until the anointing of Saul as the first king over Israel, circa 1050 B.C. (1 Sam. 8:19-20).
  - C. **3** During this time Israel was on a "spiritual roller coaster."
  - D. The spiritual climate in Israel during this period is summarized in **Judges 21:25**: *"In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes."*
    - (1) The nation would be faithful for a short time, then fall into severe apostasy.
    - (2) In apostasy, God would use foreign nations to punish/oppress Israel.
    - (3) In response, Israel would cry out to the LORD for deliverance.
    - (4) God would eventually hear Israel's cries and raise up a "judge" who would serve as a military and spiritual leader who would lead them back to the path of righteousness and defeat of their enemies.
  - (5) **\*\*** According to *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*: "JUDGES  
Military heroes or deliverers who led the nation of Israel against their enemies during the period between the death of Joshua and the establishment of the kingship. The stories of their exploits are found in the Book of JUDGES...  
During the period of the judges, from about 1380 B.C. - 1050 B.C., the government of Israel was a loose confederation of tribes gathered about their central shrine, the ARK OF THE COVENANT. Without a human king to guide them, the people tended to rebel and fall into worship of false gods time and time again. "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg 17:6; 21:25) is how the Book of Judges describes these chaotic times. To punish the people, God would send foreign nations or tribes to oppress the Israelites.  
These judges or charismatic leaders would rally the people to defeat the enemy. As God's agents for justice and deliverance, they would act decisively to free the nation from oppression. But the judges themselves were often weak, and their work was short-lived. The people would enter another stage of rebellion and idolatry, only to see the cycle of oppression and deliverance repeated all over again."
3. There were ~15 judges; the fifth in their chronology was a man named Gideon (Judges 6-8).
4. **\*\*** I want to examine the life and times of Gideon so we can learn some important lessons.

#### II. Discussion:

**One lesson we can learn from the life and times of Gideon is that...**

1. **5** Sin has consequences: 6:1-6
  - A. The LORD used Midianite raiders to punish Israel: **Judg. 6:1-2**: *"Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years, 2 and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel."*

- B. The Israelites were reaping what they had sown (Judg. 21:25; **Gal. 6:7-8**: “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”).
- (1) The Midianites kept attacking the land of Israel.
  - (2) Due to the attacks, the Israelites were forced to flee to the mountains and live in caves.
  - (3) The Midianites burned crops, destroyed livestock, and raided the Israelite’s food stores.
  - (4) As a result, the Israelites were starving and in dire straits: **Judg. 6:6**: “So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.”
- C. \*\* When it comes to sin, men are experts at rationalization.
- (1) “I can engage in this sin just once or twice and nobody will ever know and it will be great. Others have suffered the consequences, but they weren’t as smart as me!”
  - (2) “Others have been ruined by doing this, but that won’t happen to me.”
  - (3) For some reason, when it comes to sin, we think we can suspend the law of sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:7-8); **Num. 32:23**: “...be sure your sin will find you out...”
- D. \*\* When we’re tempted to sin, don’t forget the three truisms about sin:
- (1) Sin takes you further than you wanted to go.
  - (2) Sin keeps you longer than you wanted to stay.
  - (3) Sin costs you more than you wanted to pay.
- E. Israel denied these three truisms for centuries; it led them to destruction (Matt. 23:37-38).
- (1) If we flirt with sin, we may think we are “getting away with it.”
  - (2) But eventually it will come back to haunt us and destroy us.

**Another lesson we can learn from the life and times of Gideon is that...**

**2. 6 God hears prayer: 6:6-10**

- A. The Israelites were guilty of terrible sins.
- (1) Their primary sin was idol worship (Judg. 2:11-15; e.g., Baal, Ashtoreths).
  - (2) They knew better! **Lev. 20:23**: “And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them.”).
- B. Despite their terrible and rebellious sins God heard their prayers.
- Ezek. 33:11**: “Say to them: ‘As I live,’ says the LORD God, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?’”
- C. \*\* We should not take sin lightly; nor take God’s hatred of sin lightly (Isa. 59:2; Rom. 6:23).
- (1) But we can take solace in the fact that we serve a merciful God (**Psa. 86:15-16**: “But You, O LORD, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth. I 6 Oh, turn to me, and have mercy on me!”).
  - (2) \*\* We must be very careful about sin:
    - (a) We don’t have to sin, but most likely we will (**1 Jn. 2:1**: “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”).

- (b) Regardless, we must be very careful and not harden our conscience (1 Tim. 4:2):  
**Heb. 10:26-27:** *“For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.”*
- (c) Saul of Tarsus committed terrible sins (Acts 8:1, 3), but he did not sear his conscience (Acts 23:1; 2 Tim. 1:3).
- (3) We can take solace knowing that if we do not sear our conscience, even if we do something terribly, terribly wrong and foolish:
- (a) We are not irredeemable!
- (b) We are not unreachable!
- (c) God will not give up on us! **Isa. 66:2:** *“But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.”*
- (4) So, we must keep our hearts soft and pliable so we can be touched by God’s word **AND** if we truly confess and repent of our sins He will forgive us! (1 Jn. 1:9; Acts 8:22)
- D. **BUT** that does not mean we will escape the temporal consequences of sin or the shame it brings, but it does mean we can have restored fellowship with God.
- E. \*\* Many compound their sin!
- (1) They are too ashamed to admit it (i.e., “What will people say?”).
- (2) They think they can escape the temporal consequences (i.e., “If I admit X then Y will happen, and I just can’t face that.”).
- F. Recall the case of David (2 Sam. 12:1-15).
- (1) No doubt David prayed for forgiveness and was penitent, but...**Psa. 51:3:** *“For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me.”* (Isa. 66:2; **2 Sam. 12:13:** *“So David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the LORD.’”*).
- (2) **BUT** I’m sure David’s sins ate at him every day for the rest of his life (personal example).
- (3) **BUT** he did not let this destroy him so that he did not confess, repent and restore fellowship with God (Matt. 27:5; Acts 13:22).
- Psa. 51:8-13:**  
*“Make me hear joy and gladness,  
 That the bones You have broken may rejoice.  
 9 Hide Your face from my sins,  
 And blot out all my iniquities.  
 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
 And renew a steadfast spirit within me.  
 11 Do not cast me away from Your presence,  
 And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.  
 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,  
 And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.  
 13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,  
 And sinners shall be converted to You.”*
- G. No matter how far we fall, God will forgive us **IF** we confess and repent (Heb. 4:16).
- H. \*\* We must forgive and support one another:

**2 Cor. 2:6-8:** “This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, 7 so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. 8 Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.”

**Matt. 5:7:** “Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.”

**Prov. 11:17:** “The merciful man does good for his own soul...”

- I. God does not condone sin and neither can we, but we must forgive one who is guilty of even the most terrible and vile of sins when they are penitent: **Eph. 4:32:** “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”

**Gal. 6:2:** “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

**Another lesson we can learn from the life and times of Gideon is that God works through...**

3. **7 Common people:** 6:11-16

A. Gideon was not:

- (1) Born into a royal family.
- (2) Born into a wealthy family.
- (3) Born into a family that was the “pillar of religiosity” (e.g., priests or prophets).
- (4) In fact, he was a very common man, born into a farm family (6:11), and his father was an idolater (altar of Baal in his own backyard, 6:25).

B. \*\* Despite all of Gideon’s “commonness”:

**Judg. 6:12:** “And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, ‘The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!’”

- (1) The “Angel of the LORD” was confident Gideon was just the man to deliver Israel.
- (2) The “Angel of the LORD” did not care that Gideon did not have a “pedigree.”
- (3) The “Angel of the LORD” did not care that Gideon was not a graduate of the “Jerusalem School of Preaching.”
- (4) The “Angel of the LORD” did not care that Gideon did not have 30 years of full-time preaching on his resume.
- (5) The “Angel of the LORD” did not care if Gideon knew “brother big shot” or had once been a member where “brother big shot” was the preacher.
- (6) The “Angel of the LORD” did not care that Gideon was not a member at the “big famous” congregation downtown (led it prayer, waited on the table, etc.).

C. All of the requirements we place on those who we deem as valuable in the kingdom are, for the most part, very artificial and superficial. **AND** they are certainly not what God deems as important for “spiritual greatness.”

D. \*\* God achieves great things for His people thru every day, common folks like you and me.

☛ Noah: a drunkard (Gen. 9:21).

☛ Rahab: a prostitute (Josh. 2:1).

☛ Abraham: an old man (Gen. 12:4; 17:1).

☛ David: an adulterer and murderer (Acts 13:22).

☛ Moses: a stutterer (Ex. 4:10).

☛ Jonah: a deserter (Jonah 1:3).

☛ Matthew: a tax collector (Matt. 10:3).

☛ A little boy: 5 loaves, two fish (Jn. 6:9).

☛ Saul: a persecutor of Christians (Acts 26:9).

☛ Jesus: a seeming nobody (Lk. 2:7; Jn. 1:46; Isa. 53:2).

E. Also: **Heb. 11:32-38**

F. **\*\*** The gospel appeals to common, every day people: Mk. 12:37

**1 Cor. 1:26**: *"For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called."*

(1) If any good is going to be accomplished in the kingdom, God will accomplish it through ordinary, everyday people like you and me.

(2) We need to do whatever our God-given talents allow us to do and realize the Lord doesn't expect/require us to convert the world; **\*\***To achieve greatness in the kingdom:

(a) Don't care who gets the credit: **Rom. 12:3-4**: *"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith."*

**1 Cor. 4:7**: *"...who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?"*

(b) Labor in the kingdom: Matt. 20:1-16; 1 Cor. 3:9

(c) Don't ever give up: Gal. 6:10

(d) Work steadfastly for Him: 1 Cor. 15:58; Isa. 55:11

G. God made a great investment in you! Jn. 3:16 Is God getting His money's worth out of you?!

### **Another lesson we can learn from the life and times of Gideon is that the righteous...**

4. **8** Worship properly: The righteous worship "in spirit and truth": 6:25-26

A. The LORD told Gideon: *"Take your father's young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image that is beside it; 26 and build an altar to the LORD your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice..."* (Judg. 6:25-26)

B. Gideon did just as the LORD told him to do, no questions asked, no excuses offered.

C. **\*\*** So many are not satisfied with the simple worship as it is stated in the New Testament.

(1) "Well, I just love instrumental music, don't you?"

(2) "We glorify God with our instrumental music!"

D. The text says Gideon offered his sacrifice "in the proper arrangement" (vs. 26; Jn. 4:24).

(1) In other words, Gideon offered the sacrifice in the exact way God told him to offer it.

(2) He didn't say, "Well, Lord you know it would be better if we did it this way or that way."

(3) He didn't say, "Well, Lord you know it is really more uplifting for me if I offer the sacrifice in this way."

E. **\*\*** The worship of the church as revealed in the New Testament is very simple:

(1) Lord's Supper: 1 Cor. 11:23-29; Acts 20:7

- (2) Prayer: Acts 2:42; Col. 4:2
  - (3) Preaching/teaching: Acts 2:42; 20:7
  - (4) Singing: Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16
  - (5) Giving: 1 Cor. 16:1-2
- F. \*\* I'm confident the vast majority of people would find following the New Testament pattern for worship quite unpleasant and unsatisfactory; if not downright atrocious.
- (1) "You people are so boring! You need to pep it up!"
  - (2) "Here's what you need to do in order to get people in the doors."
  - (3) I'm confident many would be so turned off as to never come back again.
- G. What should we think about that?
- (1) We would be remiss if we didn't examine what we are doing so as not to unduly put someone off so much that they would never want to attend here.
  - (2) We should carefully determine exactly what it is that we do that would put people off.
    - (a) Do we put people off because we worship half-heartedly? Explain
    - (b) Do we put people off because they think what we do is boring, regardless of how enthusiastic we may be?
  - (3) If it is the former, we each need to shape up and become more enthusiastic.
  - (4) **BUT** if it is the latter, they're the one with the problem, not us.
- H. It is so important in our teaching and own thinking that we plainly express:
- (1) Acceptable worship is determined by God and not us (just as was the case of Gideon; "in the proper arrangement").
 

**Jn. 4:24:** "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

    - (a) We don't have license in the "truth" aspect of worship (Heb. 11:4; explain).
    - (b) We don't have license in the "spirit" aspect either (Proper attitude will be evident to people that are truly spiritually minded!).
  - (2) \*\* Worship is not a "spectator sport"!
    - (a) The worship service is not designed by God to entertain us!
    - (b) When done properly (Jn. 4:24) our worship will edify us (Eph. 4:15-16).
    - (c) When done properly one will realize worship flows **from** the worshiper **to** the object worshiped (i.e., from us to God).
    - (d) If proper worship according to the NT pattern does not "trip our trigger" or "float our boat" it may be that we have the incorrect expectations (explain).
- I. When worship becomes a "drag" to us we cannot inject human wisdom in an effort to please ourselves (Col. 3:23).

**Another lesson we can learn from the life and times of Gideon is that we must...**

5. **9** Expose error: 6:27-32

- A. Gideon exposed religious error in his time: **Judg. 6:25:** "...down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image that is beside it..."



B. \*\* He did so despite the consequences: **Judg. 6:30:** “Then the men of the city said to Joash, ‘Bring out your son, that he may die, because he has torn down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the wooden image that was beside it.’”

C. Those truly devoted to God won’t hesitate to expose error regardless of the consequences.

- (1) \*\* Exposing error is not easy, it’s never pleasant; and it almost always ends up with strife and division (**1 Cor. 11:19:** “For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.”).
- (2) Exposing error brands you as a trouble-maker (**1 Kgs. 18:17**); it turns friends into enemies.
- (3) I do not relish exposing error; if I were never called on again to expose error, I would not be the first bit unhappy.
- (4) \*\* However, error has been around forever (e.g., Garden of Eden, **Gen. 3:4**; golden calves, **Ex. 32**); and God gives us no other choice than to expose it!

**Eph. 5:11:** “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.”

**1 Jn. 4:1:** “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

**Rom. 16:17-18:** “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”

**1 Tim. 1:19-20:** “having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, 20 of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.”

**1 Tim. 4:1-3:** “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.”; cf. **1 Corinthians**; **Galatians**; **Colossians**

**2 Tim. 2:17-18:** “And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, 18 who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.”

- (5) If a person teaches the truth but refuses to “test the spirits”; that, in and of itself, makes them a false teacher!

D. \*\* We must hold up the hands of those preaching the “truth in love” (**Eph. 4:15**; **Ex. 17:10-12**).

**Another lesson we can learn from the life and times of Gideon is that the faithful...**

6. **10 Respond to needs:** 6:33-35

A. Gideon put out a call for help:

**Judg. 6:34-35:** “But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him. 35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.”

- B. \*\* When trouble comes you will very soon know who are your real friends! 32,000 answered Gideon's call (7:3; i.e., 32,000 answered the call!).
- C. \*\* God's people are a responsive people:
- (1) Respond to those in need: **Heb. 13:16**: "But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."
    - (a) Congregationally: **Acts 11:29**: "Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea."; **Deut. 15:11**: "For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.'"
    - (b) Individually: **Matt. 25:31-46**; **1 Jn. 3:17**: "But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?"
  - (2) Respond to weak brethren: **1 Thess. 5:14**: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all."; **Jas. 5:19-20**: "Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."
  - (3) Respond to brethren in tribulation: **2 Cor. 1:3-4**: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."
  - (4) Respond to alien sinners: **1 Tim. 2:4**; **1 Pet. 3:15**: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;"
- D. \*\* Application to our assembling together: regular services, Bible studies, gospel meetings (here and at other congregations); **Heb. 10:24-25**: "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another..."

### **Another lesson we can learn from the life and times of Gideon is that...**

#### **7. II God reveals Himself: 6:36-40**

A. Gideon asked God for a sign that He would save Israel using him (6:36-40).

B. \*\* God reveals Himself to all men:

#### (1) Nature:

**Rom. 1:19-20**: "because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,"

(a) The grand testimony of creation:

**Psa. 19:1-4**: "The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. 2 Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world."



- (b) Sadly, most deny this testimony (Smugly maintain that belief in God is stupid! Explain their dramatic ignorance.): **Psa. 14:1-3:** *“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good. 2 The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. 3 They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.”*
- (i) They demonstrate their ignorance of the vast volume of literature on the topic.
  - (ii) Their smugness betrays their ignorance, hardness of heart, and arrogance.
- (2) **\*\* Scripture:** 2 Tim. 3:16-17; There are two primary methods used to measure the reliability of ancient books.
- (a) **First** is the time span between the original writing (autograph) and the first existing copy (manuscript; i.e., ms or mss).
    - (i) The nearer the earliest ms to the autograph the greater its reliability.
    - (ii) There are portions of New Testament mss <50 years from the autographs.
    - (iii) There are several fully complete mss <250 years from the autographs.
    - (iv) Writings of well-accepted ancient writers such as Plato, Aristotle and Sophocles are 1,200 years, or more, from the autograph until the earliest mss.
  - (b) **Second** is the number of mss.
    - (i) More mss >reliability a text is considered (e.g., more “cross checking” can be done to determine accuracy.).
    - (ii) ~25,000 early manuscripts containing all, or substantial portions, of the New Testament (~5,800 Greek, ~10,000 Latin, ~9,300 other ancient languages (e.g., Syriac, Slavic, Gothic, Ethiopic, Coptic and Armenian.).
    - (iii) Works of Plato (7), Aristotle (5), the plays of Sophocles (7).
    - (iv) John Warwick Montgomery (recipient of 11 earned degrees including PhD, ThD and LLD): *“to be skeptical of the resultant text of the New Testament books is to allow all the classical works of antiquity to slip into obscurity, for no documents of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament.”*
  - (c) **\*\* Those who dismiss the Bible out of hand demonstrate their ignorance of the vast amount of credible evidence for its veracity.**
  - (d) Again, their smugness betrays their ignorance, hardness of heart, and arrogance.
- C. **\*\* To believe God has revealed Himself requires the proper attitude of heart and mind:**
- (1) Objective consideration of nature’s evidence (Law of Causality, intelligent design, inadequacy of Darwinism, etc.).
  - (2) Objective consideration of Scripture:
 

**Jn. 6:44-45:** *“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.”*

**Jn. 7:17:** *“If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.”; 1 Cor. 2:9-10; 2 Tim. 3:16-17*

**Another lesson we can learn from the life and times of Gideon is that the Lord's work is always accomplished by...**

8. **12** A committed minority: 7:2-8

- A. Recall Gideon started out with 32,000 fighting men.
  - (1) First cut: **Judg. 7:3:** *"Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead." And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained."*
  - (2) Still too many: **Judg. 7:4:** *"But the LORD said to Gideon, 'The people are still too many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there.'"*
  - (3) Final cut: **Judg. 7:7:** *"Then the LORD said to Gideon, 'By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, every man to his place.'"*
- B. \*\* Gideon's small band of 300 defeated an army of 135,000! How? Totally commitment coupled with God's help!
- C. \*\* The Lord's work has and is always done through a committed minority.
  - (1) The "80 20 rule" is one of the most helpful concepts for life and business management.
  - (2) Also known as the "Pareto Principle," this rule suggests that 20 percent of your activities will account for 80 percent of your results.
  - (3) It also means 20 percent of the workers do 80 percent of the work.
- D. \*\* When it comes to the Lord's church, which group are you in?
  - (1) Are you part of the 20 percent who does 80 percent of the work?
  - (2) Or, are you part of the 80 percent who do only 20 percent of the work?
- E. You are important to the Lord's work! **Eph. 4:16:** *"...the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."*

**Another lesson we can learn from the life and times of Gideon is that...**

9. **13** Victory is certain: 7:9-22

- A. The LORD insured Gideon before the start of the battle that he would gain the victory: **Judg. 7:9:** *"It happened on the same night that the LORD said to him, 'Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand.'"*
- B. \*\* But Gideon still had to follow God's plan!
  - (1) He had to DO something!
    - (a) Divide his 300 men into three companies (vs. 16),
    - (b) Every man had a trumpet in one hand, pitcher w/torch in the other hand (vs. 16),
    - (c) When Gideon blew his trumpet, every man was to blow his trumpet and break his pitcher (vs. 18),
  - (2) Gideon had to do it the way God told him to do it for victory to be insured!
- C. \*\* God insures us we will be victorious: we'll defeat Satan and death and gain a home in heaven, **IF...**
  - (1) \*\* We DO something!

(2) AND if we do it the way God tells us to do it!

**Matt. 28:19-20:** “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”; Eph. 2:8-10

**Lk. 6:46:** “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?”; Heb. 5:8-9

**1 Jn. 2:3-5:** “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.”

D. \*\* Do you expect to be victorious over death? Are you observing “all things” Jesus “commanded you”? T-H-I-N-K!

**Another lesson we can learn from the life and times of Gideon is that Gideon and his men...**

10. **14** Pursue even when exhausted:

A. Gideon and his men were exhausted, yet they continue to pursue the Midianites: **Judg. 8:4:** “And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them.”

B. \*\* It easy to grow weary and give up! I’ve seen too many Christians “throw in the towel”!

(1) False teaching: **2 Pet. 2:1-2:** “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” (KJV)

(2) Trials of life: **2 Cor. 4:16-5:1:** “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” (KJV)

(3) Doing good (i.e., doesn’t always seem to “pay off”!): **Gal. 6:9:** “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” (KJV)

C. \*\* We need to “keep on keeping on”! Rev. 2:10

**Another lesson we can learn from the life and times of Gideon is that...**

11. **15** No compromise:

A. The men of Succoth and the men of Penuel would not give aid to Gideon and his men as they pursued the kings of Midian (Zebah and Zalmunna):

**Judg. 8:5-9:** “Then he said to the men of Succoth, ‘Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.’ 6 And the leaders of Succoth said, ‘Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your army?’ 7 So Gideon said, ‘For this cause, when the LORD has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers!’ 8 Then he went up from there to Penuel and spoke to them in the same way. And the

men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered. 9 So he also spoke to the men of Penuel, saying, 'When I come back in peace, I will tear down this tower!'"

- B. Gideon did not compromise:
  - (1) With the shirkers: i.e., men of Succoth and Penuel
  - (2) With the Midianites: 8:10, (8:12: "routed the whole army")
- C. \*\* Enemies of the truth will always try to get us to compromise the truth:
  - (1) "It's ok to use instrumental music!"
  - (2) "You are so hard-hearted! Surely we can give money out of the church treasury to people who are not Christians!"
  - (3) "You're telling me you really believe getting wet (i.e., baptism) is necessary for salvation?"
- D. \*\* Let us never listen to the naysayers but always listen to the Lord! **Isa. 8:20:** "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (KJV); Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11

**Another lesson we can learn here is that in his victory, Gideon showed...**

12. **16 Humility:** 8:22-23

- A. Gideon lead Israel to a great victory! **Judg. 8:7:** "routed the whole army"
  - (1) \*\* The people wanted Gideon to rule over them: **Judg. 8:22:** "Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, 'Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also; for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.'"
  - (2) Gideon refused: **Judg. 8:23:** "But Gideon said to them, 'I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you.'"
- B. \*\* The kingdom of God has an unusual organizational chart:

**Mk. 10:42-45:** "But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, 'You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. 44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.'"
- C. We are totally unfit for God's kingdom unless we are humble: **Matt. 5:5:** "Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth."
- D. \*\* How's your humility doing? **Phil. 2:1-5:** "Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,"

**Another lesson we can learn from the life and times of Gideon is that...**

13. **17 God's people are always in danger of apostasy:** 8:27, 33

- A. Gideon took the gold ornaments of the Midianites and made an ephod out of it (ephod: a sacred ornamented vest worn by the high priest).

**Judg. 8:27:** "Then Gideon made it into an ephod and set it up in his city, Ophrah. And all Israel played the harlot with it there. It became a snare to Gideon and to his house."

- (1) What a tragedy! Did Gideon know his actions had sewn the seeds of total apostasy?
- (2) **\*\*** Note the situation in Israel in a few short years: **Judg. 8:33-35**: “So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god. 34 Thus the children of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side; 35 nor did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (Gideon) in accordance with the good he had done for Israel.”
- B. **\*\*** Apostasy has always haunted God’s people (Gen. 3; Israel); and always will! We must have the spiritual courage to always stand for the truth and identify, denounce and shun error!
- Eph. 5:11-12**: “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.”
- Rom. 16:17-18**: “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”
- Isa. 8:20**: “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”
- 2 Jn. 9-11**: “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; 11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.”
- C. **\*\*** Never take truth and faithfulness for granted! Apostasy is always lurking in the shadows!

### Another lesson we can learn from the life and times of Gideon is that...

#### 14. **18** God’s people suffer when leadership is poor: 8:33-34

- A. As we’ve just seen; God’s people totally fell away after Gideon was gone.
- Judg. 8:33-34**: “So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god. 34 Thus the children of Israel did not remember the Lord their God...”
- B. **\*\*** God’s people have always suffered when their leadership was poor!
- (1) Israel: all 20 kings had one thing in common: they “*did evil in the sight of the LORD*.”
- (2) Judah: also had 20 kings; weren’t much better; only a handful were faithful to any degree.
- C. **\*\*** God’s people still need good leaders!
- (1) Note the qualification of elders: **Titus 1:6-9**: “if a man is **blameless**, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or **insubordination**. 7 For a bishop must be **blameless**, as a steward of God, **not self-willed**, **not quick-tempered**, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, 8 but hospitable, **a lover of what is good**, sober-minded, **just**, **holy**, self-controlled, 9 **holding fast the faithful word** as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”
- (2) **\*\*** Good leaders are selfless, blameless and dedicated to truth and the cause of Christ!
- (3) Pray all churches can develop and appoint such men! Otherwise the church and the cause of Christ will suffer greatly!

### III. Conclusion: **19**

- I. The Old Testament is not our source of religious authority today: Col. 2:14; Heb. 8:7-13

2. But that doesn't mean it isn't important for us to study the Old Testament:

**\*\*Rom. 15:4:** *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."* (KJV)

3. Let's take these lessons from the account of Gideon and apply them diligently to our lives.

**\*\*I Cor. 10:11-12:** *"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. 12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."* (KJV)

4. Invitation